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La Porte Catches Burglary Suspect, Drops Another's Charges

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La Porte police arrested one car-burglary suspect this week and dropped a charge against another who they now say was erroneously identified.

Dustin Clarkson, 18, of La Porte is charged with two counts of burglary of a motor vehicle. One count stems from a burglary with which another La Porte resident, Michael Anthony Montes, was previously charged. The burglary charge against Montes has been dropped, police say, but he is still being held on other charges. Police had charged Montes based on video evidence they said showed Montes breaking into cars. They admitted that a witness made a mistake, because the two men look somewhat alike.

"The video evidence remained unadulterated," La Porte Police spokesman Sgt. John Krueger says. "Yet with both suspects having similar features, and the footage picturing the suspect from the rear, the error came as a result of an inaccurate citizens eye-witness statement, provided to investigators.

La Porte officers were called just before midnight on Monday to handle a report of a man jumping over residential fences in the Fairmont East subdivision. The caller told police he had seen a man rummaging through his car in his driveway. Police say a Morgan's Point officer later noticed a vehicle leaving a construction area along Spencer Highway and followed it while she listened to La Porte police's radio channel.

La Porte police say they stopped this vehicle for alleged traffic violations and discovered stolen property in the vehicle, leading to Clarkson's arrest. An eyewitness also identified Clarkson as the suspected burglar. After interviewing Clarkson, investigators believe he's also committed other car burglaries in the area, including several in the Glen Meadows subdivision in which Montes was initially charged. Police expect more charges to be filed soon against Clarkson.